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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1030
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 002479

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/23/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: POST-ELECTION POSTURING: ABDULLAH SAYS FRAUD
"WIDESPREAD"

REF: KABUL 2468

Classified By: PolCouns Annie Pforzheimer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Presidential Candidate Dr. Abdullah Abdullah told CODEL Casey on August 23 he could no longer "turn his eye" from widespread election irregularities, in particular in the southern provinces. His biggest concern remains polling centers in the south claiming 40-45 percent voter turnout, when "all observers" saw actual turnout at less than 10 percent. He said he "had faith in the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC)," but that the votes from these suspicious voting centers must be quarantined and not announced as part of the election results. He claimed Karzai was behind the fraud. He said he asked his followers to "be patient" until official numbers were announced, noting that it would be irresponsible to call his people to protest in such a fragile country. However, he said if the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) included the fraudulent votes, he was "unsure" what his people would do. End Summary.

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¶2. (C) Abdullah told CODEL Casey on August 23 that he is most concerned about possible ballot stuffing in Kandahar, Ghazni, and Khost provinces, but also noted irregularities in Helmand, Paktya and Paktika. He claimed voter turnout in Kandahar, for example, was less than 10 percent, but some polling results claimed a 40-45 percent voter turnout. He repeated a concern he had voiced earlier (reftel) that his agents were not accredited until the day before the elections, preventing them from traveling in time to remote polling centers, and were "blocked by government officials" from entering six districts in Kandahar. He said a prominent pro-Karzai local commander in Kandahar was responsible, noting that a polling center was located in this commander's house. He claimed that in 46 other cases in Kandahar, polling centers were inappropriately located in someone's home, noting most of the homes belonged to Karzai-supporters.

¶3. (C) Abdullah stated to the CODEL that he could "not turn his eye away from widespread irregularities." He said if it had been more limited, he would not have made statements to the press. However, he said, in the past day the reports he received from his polling agents and local supporters in the provinces forced him to take a stronger stance. He said in order to save "the process and Afghanistan," any suspicious votes should be quarantined by the ECC, and not counted in the initial voting estimates on August 25. (Note: The 25 August announcement is just the beginning of the IEC rolling count that will produce full provisional results on about 3N 02 OF 02 KABUL 002479

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claimed 10,000 people were counted voting, while 100,000 votes were supposedly cast. Abdullah also said he is exploring the possibility of a coalition candidacy in the case that the election went into a second round.

16. (U) CODEL Casey cleared on this cable.
EIKENBERRY

KABUL 00002479 002 OF 002

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